

# Farmington River Regional School District

## School Committee Meeting

Meeting #432

Farmington River Elementary School Computer Lab  
Monday, May 1st, 2023  
7:00 PM

MINUTES

**Masks Optional**

*Call in number to listen only; community participation requires being in person.  
Phone number: 605-313-5711 Access code - 7622376*

**Members Present:** Alex Bowman, Deb Fogel, Roger Kohler, Carol Lombardo, Phil Magovern, Carl Nett, Arlene Tolopko

**Also Present:** Eric Jesner, Robert Putnam, Caroline Stamm

- I. **Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM by Carol Lombardo.
  - A. **Roll Call:** Alex Bowman, Deb Fogel, Roger Kohler, Carol Lombardo, Phil Magovern, Carl Nett, Arlene Tolopko
- II. **Public Comment:**
  - A. Cecily Goulange, the President of the FRES PTA, approached the School Committee with a public statement on behalf of the PTA promoting the Scree-Free Week Events and the Scholastic Book Fair. She asked for donations to help fund students who cannot afford to purchase books from the Book Fair if anyone is able and willing to donate to ensure every student can take a book home.
  - B. Denise Hardie mentioned that during the Bingo Night tonight, she spoke with a school-choice parent whose students are in their first year here, and she is happy to be a part of FRES with the community support and culture we've created.
- III. **Acceptance of Minutes:**
  - Meeting #429 from March 29th, 2023 (Special Meeting)
  - Meeting #430 from April 3rd, 2023
  - Meeting #431 from April 10th, 2023 (Special Meeting)
  - A. Deb Fogel motioned to accept the minutes from meetings #429, #430, and #431.
  - B. Arlene Tolopko seconded the motion.
  - C. **VOTE:** Alex Bowman, Deb Fogel, Roger Kohler, Carol Lombardo, Phil Magovern, Carl Nett, and Arlene Tolopko were in favor. There were no objections, and the motion passed to accept the minutes from meetings #429, #430, and #431.
- IV. **Superintendent's Report:**
  - Safety Recommendations from the Otis Police Department
  - Principal and Business Administrator Search Update
  - May 3rd Literacy Night
  - The inter-district school choice law (G.L. c.76, s.12B) requires all districts to accept incoming school choice students unless the school committee votes not to participate or votes to limit the number of incoming students in particular grades. The recommendation of the administration is to accept incoming students at all grades.
  - A. **Safety Recommendations from the Otis Police Department:**
    1. Rob acknowledges receipt of a letter from Kris McDonough, the Otis Chief of

Police, writing recommendations to replace or refurbish the front doors/window to prevent unwanted entry.

- a) This conversation began as a response to the Nashville shooting. It was prompted by Laurie Flower, who is updating safety manuals, and will be a topic for the Building and Grounds Subcommittee once it is formed.

**B. Principal Search Update:**

1. Laurie Flower has been chosen as the new principal for FRES.
  - a) This decision comes from mutual agreement from Rob and Timothy Lee, the new Superintendent, with agreement from the School Committee.
2. Rob discussed the mutual benefits of combining their backgrounds and skills.
  - a) He highlighted that Tim has ample experience as an elementary school principal and has mentored many principals, which will aid Laurie in stepping into this role. Laurie has established relationships with staff & members of the district and can guide Tim's entry into the district.
3. Laurie offered a statement of acceptance and gratitude for the appointment.

**C. Business Administrator Search Update:**

1. Rob has consulted with the Massachusetts Association of School Business Officials (MASBO) to discuss the three options regarding filling the position:
  - a) Posting for Full-Time Business Administrator
  - b) Posting a request for proposals for Business Management Firms
  - c) Reach out to retired Business Managers for
  - d) part-time employment
2. So far, we have received several applications for Business Administrators and one proposal from a Business Management Firm.

**D. May 3rd Literacy Night:**

1. The Literacy Night Committee has invited the School Committee to attend the Literacy Night Event.
2. The event has been well received - with over 240 people RSVP'd to attend.
3. Parking: Rob has contacted Town Hall for overflow parking and will shuttle people to the school to deter people from parking along Route 8 for safety.

**E. Annual School-Choice Decision:**

1. The Committee discussed how many school-choice students they could accept.
  - a) Rob suggests an enrollment cap of 20 students per class - we may have more availability for school choice in some classes than others due to the number of students already enrolled.
2. The School Committee agreed to open school-choice enrollment for all grades.

**F. SPED Tiered Review:**

1. We had the visit last week - the visit concluded FRES remains in compliance.
2. Mike Saporito will present the final written report when it becomes available.

**G. PreK/EK Screenings: In April, FRES held screenings for incoming Pre-K and Early K students for the 2023-2024 School Year. We anticipate 13 incoming students and will offer additional screening appointments as needed.**

**H. MCAS Testing: ELA MCAS are finished, MATH MCAS are coming up the week of May 15th, and Science MCAS for 5th Grade will be the following week.**

**V. Director of Business and Finance Report:**

- Review Warrants

- Vote to close Berkshire Bank Student Activity Account & Berkshire Bank Grade 6

- A. Warrants: Eric has warrants present for anyone to review.
- B. Vote to close Berkshire Bank Student Activity Account & Grade 6 Account:
  - 1. Eric proposed closing these accounts and reorganizing the system.
  - 2. Alex Bowman motioned to close the Berkshire Bank Student Activity Account and Berkshire Bank Grade 6 Account.
  - 3. Carl Nett seconded the motion.
  - 4. Vote: Alex Bowman, Deb Fogel, Roger Kohler, Carol Lombardo, Phil Magovern, Carl Nett, and Arlene Tolopko were in favor, there were no objections, and the motion passed to close the Berkshire Bank Student Activity Account and Grade 6 Account.

**VI. Formation of the Regional Agreement Amendment Committee (RAAC):**

- *The Town of Sandisfield has chosen the following people to serve on the RAAC: Carl Nett, School Committee; Steve Seddon, Select Board; John Field, Select Board; Jonathan Sylbert, Town Manager.*
- *The Town of Otis has chosen the following people to serve on the RAAC: Carol Lombardo, School Committee; Susan Brofman, Community Member; Frank Tolopko, Community Member; Therese Gould, Select Board.*
- *The committee will appoint the RAAC Chair.*
  - A. Carol Lombardo recognized the RAAC's formation and those chosen to serve on it.
  - B. The Committee will postpone the appointment of a RAAC Chair until the next meeting.

**VII. Other items for discussion not reasonably anticipated by the Chair 48 hours before the meeting:**

- A. Subcommittees: Carol wanted to acknowledge that there is currently only one subcommittee (the RAAC) and recognizes that the committee needs to establish more.
- B. Alex Bowman: This was Alex Bowman's final meeting as a School Committee Member.
- C. Roger Kohler: This was Roger Kohler's final meeting as a School Committee Member.

**VIII. Agenda Items for June 5th, 2023 School Committee Meeting:**

- A. June Meeting: As a reminder, June's meeting is the Reorganization Meeting.

**IX. Executive Session**

- *To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares;*

- *To conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel (BHRSD), collective bargaining sessions, or contract negotiations with nonunion personnel*

- A. Alex Bowman made the motion to exit into executive session at 7:29 PM.
- B. Carl Nett seconded the motion.
- C. Vote - Roll Call: Alex Bowman, Deb Fogel, Roger Kohler, Carol Lombardo, Phil Magovern, Carl Nett, Arlene Tolopko

**I. Motion to Adjourn:**

- A. Roger Kohler made the motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:39 PM
- B. Phil Magovern seconded the motion.
- C. Vote - Roll Call: Alex Bowman, Deb Fogel, Roger Kohler, Carol Lombardo, Phil Magovern, Carl Nett, Arlene Tolopko

Respectfully submitted,  
Caroline Stamm

Otis Police Department  
1 North Main Road  
Otis, Ma 01253



Kristopher G. McDonough  
Chief of Police

April 27, 2023

Farmington River School District  
School Committee

RE: Farmington River Elementary School Building Security Concerns  
Otis, MA

Dear Board Members,

As a result of the recent school shooting in Nashville TN, the Otis Police Department met with Acting Principal Laurie Flowers and Business Manager Eric Jesner regarding the school's physical security. Specifically, its ability to prohibit or severely slow unwanted entry of the school.

As the board members may know, the shooter in Nashville TN used a rifle to shoot glass panels in a side door, shattering the safety glass in the door. The shooter was then immediately able to enter the building by walking through the frame of the door.

Those present inspected the Otis school's first floor doors and windows and found them inadequate to stop or slow someone determined to enter the building.

The exterior doors are primarily constructed of unreinforced glass panels with a metal frame. Glass in these types of doors are generally constructed of a safety type glass that is designed to fragment or

break into small pieces when struck, so as not to cause harm. Breaking this glass would allow rapid entry into the school.

The exterior window panels next to the school's primary entry door appear to be constructed of a standard unreinforced window glass. It is unknown if the window glass is a safety type glass. Breaking this glass would allow rapid entry into the school.

The school's exterior windows appear to be constructed of a standard unreinforced window glass. It is unknown if the window glass is a safety type glass. Breaking this glass would allow rapid entry into the building.

There are interior windows in the school's office and the cafeteria that are reinforced with a mesh wire, but this will not stop anyone from entering the building, only those rooms.

Another safety concern is regarding the main entry area for the school. This area consists of a primary exterior entry door, a vestibule area where a person may speak with an office worker, and a second entry door that leads into the school. This second entry door does not lock and is also constructed of glass panels with a metal frame.

Although not a physical security measure, we also became aware that initiation of the lockdown / evacuation protocol must come from the school's office or specific phones in the building (only specific phones have the building all-page feature). This is not a best practice as any employee who sees something requiring these protocols to be initiated should be able to do so without reliance on contacting someone else or locating one of these specific phones.

The Otis Police Department recommends the following building physical safety improvements:

- Replace all exterior doors and the secondary main entry door with steel security doors (preferred), OR
- Replace all glass panels in these doors with a security glass that cannot be penetrated if broken, OR
- Apply a membrane or film over the existing door glass to hold it in place if broken and to prohibit a person from removing the glass and gaining access to the school.
- Install an electronic lock on the second entry door at the school's main entrance.
- Initiate a protocol that the second interior door should not be opened/unlocked until the initial exterior entry door is closed and locked.
- Upgrade school communications so that any employee can initiate the lockdown / evacuation procedure without having to contact the office or locate a specific phone.

These recommendations are intended to slow an attacker's ability to enter the building while giving the police time to respond to the school. Given the geographical size of Otis and the limited number of police officers, police response time could be lengthy if officers are not close to the school when called.

Please do not hesitate to contact myself [Policechief@townofotisma.com](mailto:Policechief@townofotisma.com) or Sgt. T. Weidhaas [Policesergeant@townofotisma.com](mailto:Policesergeant@townofotisma.com) with any questions you may have.

Respectfully,



Chief Kristopher McDonough

Otis Police Department